

F - Fever

F-C COMPLICATIONS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the common and important complications of fever.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that most fevers are harmless and are the body's natural response to infection and that fever may even be helpful in fighting infection.
2. Explain that fevers below 107°F (41.6°C) do not typically cause any type of permanent damage. Explain that the brain's thermostat keeps untreated fever below this level.
3. Discuss that only about 5% of children who develop fever may have a brief seizure associated with the fever. Explain that this type of seizure is generally harmless and will usually go away as the child gets older. Seizures with fever in adults are not febrile seizures and may require further investigation.
4. Discuss the potentially fatal complications of fever in a child under 2 months of age. **Refer to NF.**

F-DP DISEASE PROCESS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the role of fever in illness.

STANDARDS:

1. Discuss that fever is a body temperature that is above normal. Discuss the parameters used by your institution to define significant fever, e.g., rectal or oral temperature >101°F or >38°C.
2. Discuss that fever is a symptom, not a disease.
3. Discuss that fever is the body's natural response to infection.
4. Explain that fever helps fight infections by turning on the body's immune system and impeding the spread of the infection.
5. Explain that the height of the fever does not necessarily correspond to the seriousness of the illness. Explain that a better indicator of seriousness of illness is how sick the child or adult acts.
6. Discuss that most fevers are caused by viral illnesses, some are caused by bacterial illnesses. Explain that viral illnesses do not respond to antibiotic therapy.

F-EQ EQUIPMENT

OUTCOME: The patient/family will have an understanding and demonstrate (when appropriate) the proper use and care of equipment.

STANDARDS:

1. Discuss the indications for and benefits of the prescribed medical equipment.
2. Discuss types and features of the medical equipment as appropriate.
3. Discuss and/or demonstrate the proper use, the care, and the cleaning of medical equipment.
4. Participate in a return demonstration by the patient/family.
5. Discuss signs of equipment malfunction and proper action in case of malfunction as appropriate.
6. Discuss proper disposal of associated medical supplies.

F-FU FOLLOW-UP

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the importance of follow-up for fever.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain the importance of returning to the clinic or emergency room immediately if the patient should become more ill, become lethargic, look very sick or develop a purple rash.
2. Discuss that if the patient does not seem to be getting better after a few days of treatment the patient may need to be re-evaluated.
3. Discuss the need to return to the clinic or emergency room for fever that will not come down with antipyretics (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen) or is over 105°F (40.5°C).
4. Discuss the potentially fatal complications of fever in a child under 2 months of age. Explain that any child with a fever who is under 2 months of age should be seen by a physician immediately. **Refer to NF.**

F-HM HOME MANAGEMENT

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the home care techniques for responding to fever, as appropriate to this patient.

STANDARDS:

1. Explain that fever causes excess loss of body fluids because of sweating, increased heart rate and increased respiratory rate. Discuss the importance of extra fluids to replace this excess body fluid loss.

2. Explain that clothing should be kept to a minimum as most body heat is lost through the skin. Bundling will cause higher fever.
3. Discuss that sponging is not usually necessary to reduce fever.
 - a. Explain that sponging without giving acetaminophen or ibuprofen may cause shivering and this may actually increase the fever.
 - b. Instruct that if shivering occurs during sponging that the sponging should be discontinued to allow the fever reducing agent to work.
 - c. Discuss that if sponging is done, only lukewarm water should be used. Because sponging works to lower the temperature by evaporation of water from the skin's surface, sponging is more effective than immersion.
 - d. Explain that only water should be used for sponging.
4. Explain that the use of rubbing alcohol for sponging may cause the fumes to be breathed in and could cause coma.

F-L LITERATURE

OUTCOME: The patient/family will receive literature about fever.

STANDARDS:

1. Provide the patient/family with literature on fever.
2. Discuss the content of the literature.
3. Explain the need for follow-up if the fever lasts for more than three days.

F-M MEDICATIONS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand the use of antipyretics in the control of fever.

STANDARDS:

1. Emphasize that aspirin (even baby aspirin) should NEVER be used to control fever in children under the age of 13 except under the direction of a physician.
2. Discuss the appropriate dose of acetaminophen for this patient. Discuss that acetaminophen may be given every 4–6 hours for the control of fever.
3. Discuss the appropriate dose of ibuprofen for this patient. Discuss that ibuprofen may be given every 6–8 hours for the control of fever.
4. As appropriate, discuss dosing of other fever reducing agents that may be used for this patient.
5. Discuss avoidance of combination products (e.g., antipyretics combined with decongestants) unless directed to do so by a provider.

6. Discuss the method for combining acetaminophen and ibuprofen for the control of fever if appropriate. (Alternate the two medicines, e.g., acetaminophen every 8 hours and ibuprofen every 8 hours, giving one then the other at 4 hour intervals.)

F-TE TESTS

OUTCOME: The patient/family will understand that testing is necessary to determine the etiology of the fever. They will also have an understanding of the potential adverse outcomes of the tests to be performed or the risks of not performing the recommended tests.

STANDARDS:

1. Discuss with the patient/family the test(s) to be performed. Discuss the procedure for performing the test(s) in terms that can be understood by the patient /family.
2. Explain the benefit of the test as well as the risk(s) involved in performing the test(s). Explain the risk(s) associated with not performing the recommended test(s).
3. Explain that obtaining the results of some tests routinely performed to determine the etiology of fever (cultures of various body fluids) can take several days.